

## HOME READING.

## A Valentine.

O gracious heart,  
Some one knocking at the door;  
I am so tired and sore.  
Come before  
The big tears start:  
Some one knocking at the door!

At home with loving art  
To worship, and implore;  
He depart  
With wise, mysterious love,  
Come, come, O gracious heart,  
Some one knocking at the door!

*The Century.*

## King Allill's Death.

King Allill won the peace of God—  
King Allill beyond the Irish sea  
An day against a Connacht clan.

The King was wanted. In the fight  
He returned to his chariot,  
"The stock; the slaughter, is it red?  
The players, are they drawing near?"

The men looked back. The west wind blew  
Dear plashen's hair against his face,  
He heard the war shout of his foes,  
The death cry of his ruined race.

The came darting from the height  
Like pine trees down a swollen fall,  
Like bays of hay in flood, his clan  
Sang on or sank—saw it all.

And spake: "The slaughter is full red,  
But we may still be saved by flight."  
Then cried the King, "No sin of theirs  
Fall on my people here to night."

No sin of theirs, but sin of mine,  
For I was worst of evil Kings,  
Unrighteous, wrathful, hurling down  
To death or shame all weaker things.

"Draw rein, and turn the chariot round.  
My face against the foemen bend,  
When I am seen and slain, mayhap  
The slaughter of my tribe will end."

They drew and turned. Down came the foe,  
The King fell cloven to the soil.  
The slaughter then was stayed, and so  
King Allill won the peace of God.

*The Academy.*

## Romer and his Julia.

The little county town of Romer enjoys a rather ancient reputation for some memorials of antiquity—its pretty market place, quaint town hall, old fountain, &c. It is old-fashioned enough, and there is a little country society there, owing to the seats of the county gentlemen touching its outskirts, and various persons of influence and respectability residing in some of its sound and picturesque old houses. There is a "History of Romer and its Antiquities," by a learned clergyman, well worth perusal by those who feel any interest in the place. In Romer, celebrated for its old town hall, there lived the family of Romers. Young Romer was well known—a dreamy, good-looking youth, who did little or nothing save what is vulgarly termed "nothing" about the place, perhaps seeking his ideal, but who was immensely admired by a circle of young fellows who frequented the bars and billiard rooms of the "Railway Hotel"—the drill and ready McHugh Shaw, the boisterous young Theobald (or Tibbald) and others. These formed his set. The family were rather down in the world, but the ladies ever admired the fine eyes and poetic temperament of young Romer.

Close to the town was the show seat of Sir James Caplett, a good old county family. The Capplets and the Romers were once on easy terms, but at the last election Mr. Romer, senior, had worked the Radical candidate thus helping to defeat Sir James, and a fatal breach occurred. They were now at deadly feud; did not speak, never would speak again. No more dinners or lawn tennis parties, of course, "cakies nor ale," or tea. And when the Capplets were giving their grand fancy ball to the whole county the Romers were left out.

Now, every one knows how embittered becomes an enemy of this kind in a small county town. In this case it extended to the very servants of the parties and very recently matters came to a climax, when actually a fray occurred near the "Dragon" public house, between a couple of grooms of Sir James Caplett and the Romers' coachman. They were passing across the market place when it grooms accused the latter of taking what is called "a sight" at him, always a coarse and unmeaning shape of insult; the other in defense saying (illogically enough) that "he was as good a man any day and better as he." On this a perfect row or scuffle took place, and Tibbald, who was as usual drinking at the bar, rushed out, and with his stick began to belabor the grooms. Others took part in the conflict—there was a general uproar. By a strange coincidence, Sir James with his lady were driving by, and a passionate man, he jumped down to take the part of his servants, and really, but for the interference of the chief constable, a perfect riot would have followed. To add to this confusion, young Romer, who though he disdained not to drink, was always "mooching" about these bars, found himself in the melee. What followed was of a painful disagreeable kind. There were the police court reprimands, countercharges, and the whole town was drawn in, and though only slight penalties were inflicted, it was felt that there was an unenvied eminence ranking in the breast of all which at any moment might break out.

Now it came to pass about a month after this event, some of these young men were at Spier's and Spond's bar of the railway station—a favorite haunt. There was the lively McHugh Shaw, the wit of the place; "Tibbald," the *tutto quanti*, and young Romer, as usual, looking on mournfully and disdainfully.

"In the dumps?" cried McHugh, when he saw his friend. "What's wrong? Ah! I have it. Ridden a nightmare after that *foul grasse* last night."

The young poet, then in one of his depressed fits—"Moody and Shaky," as the wit used to call him—replied absently:

"What is a nightmare?"

Winking at his friends, Murcott started up and imitating a popular tragedian went off into one of his funny bursts.

Fancy yourself in a coach with a fat woman leaning on your chest. Fancy a coil of rope wound tightly round you and pulled at the ends by wild horses! Dear boy, there are a dozen different kinds. The stiffer, the groaner, the grunter, the

shorter, the agonizer, the jumper, etc., etc. It's an unpleasant thing, but they all do it. I'd like to see Romer with a good thoroughbred nightmare prancing and kicking over his elegant chest."

Roars of laughter greeted this playful exercise of Murcott's wit. He excelled in this sort of thing, and was fond of "chaffing" his friend.

I see him now stretched sweetly a la Byron. He dreams, he smiles. All the young ladies are clustered round. Suddenly he groans or grunts. The quadruped has kicked him. He sighs and smiles again. He is waltzing—another kick—another groan. It is too much, and with a start he awakes."

Romer, not relishing this buffoonery, gave him a sickly "Rosetti-woman" sort of smile.

McHugh said seriously:

"Why not go to the fancy ball to-night, my dear Romer? That will cheer you, my boy."

"I'm not asked," said Romer. "You know why."

"Numpish page," said McHugh in odd French. "I hear the loveliest thing out is to be there—though she is not strictly out."

"Who?" said Romer still languidly. "I care not whether she is out or no."

"Or her mother either!" cried the irrepressible McHugh. "But she is a beauty. Oh my!"

"Who is she, though?" asked Romer, somewhat attracted by his amatory pantomimist.

"Why, sweet Julia, of course."

"Who is she, I say?" said Romer testily.

"Why, Julia Caplett, of course; just from school—blushing sixteen, and all that."

"Indeed," said Romer, with some languid interest, "is she so lovely?"

"O nyum nyum!" said McHugh, in his comic way. "Ripe, nutty flavor, as the wine merchants say, divine!"

"Indeed," repeated Romer.

"Aye, but she's engaged, my boy, to the obliging order of young Parish—the Count, as we call him."

"To be thrown away on a fellow like that—a snob!" said Romer, bitterly. "It's a shame, and he shall not have her."

The ball at Caplett Hall was really splendid. It was given with an artful view, for Sir James did not despair of recovering the county from the Radicals. The Corrupt Practices act had not then been dreamed of. Every one was asked but the Romers and their faction, who were left out in the most marked way. No expense had been spared. Gunter, from London, Paeket's band, from the great manufacturing town—for the Capplets were wealthy people and went to town for the season, and knew how to do things "in style."

It was a stately, noble mansion, indeed, was Caplett Hall. All its rooms were thrown open. Sir James was arrayed to the merry monarch—his lady as the Queen, and all the suites of rooms overflowed with the usual books, nuns, Henry the Eighth, Francis the Firsts, and postmen seen on such occasions. There were several special quadrilles, above all Lady Caplett's own, with all the ladies and gentlemen as courtiers and belles of Charles II's time, and which was exhibited again and again, to the disgust of many, but to the infinite content of the performers.

Sir James was looking on with a gratified expression, when up came young Tibbald.

"I say, uncle," he said, "here's a hanged liberty for a fellow to take—an infernal insult!"

"What is it?" asked Sir James astonished.

"Dye see that pilgrim fellow all that hard hat? Do you know who it is?"

"Not I," said his uncle. "I hardly know a soul in the room."

"It's Romer!"

"God bless me," said Sir James, mechanically. "He wasn't asked."

"I should think not. I'll just take him by the scruff of the neck and kick him out."

"No, no. I'll have no row. Leave him alone."

"I won't, uncle; skulking hound. Wait until I get him outside, I'll punch his head."

"Now, see here, Tibbald, this is my house. I'll have no rows; let him alone!"

With much grumbling the young bully went off his violence.

And was it Romer who had thus, in defiance of all etiquette, attended without an invitation? It was indeed. He had been drawn by a strange irresistible fascination. The first glimpse of the lovely Julia Caplett had completely dazed him, as he had an instinct beforehand it would. How odd is this feeling. He was entranced—captured. He followed her about, the pilot; others noted this persistency.

There was the greenhouse, into which the young Parish, a jolly fellow enough, had brought her, and had then gone off to "get her on ice." Romer seized the opportunity, and, absolutely, without any introduction, drew near, and in the softest, tenderest manner took her hand. The sweet Julia was made for love, was all love. At the fashionable Brighton Boarding School Miss Primmer, the Principal, had often to reprove her for what she called her "forwardness" to the good-looking young Italian music master, to the fairly presentable drawing room, to the master Professor of German, and even to the little crabb'd old French dancing master who fancied himself a Lovelace. There are harsh beings who would have called her flirt, but we cannot go with them. It was all the gentle passion, and she indeed loved love and nothing but love, if we may use the old phrase.

Therefore, when the elegant young pilot sat down beside her she was not frightened. Looking round, and seeing that no one was looking, he gently took her hand.

"What were lips," he whispered "made for?"

"For conversation," she said, with a roguish laugh.

"Hardly," he said; "at least, that is a secondary purpose. Leave that to the clergy. Oh! but you sweet girl, there's no harm in it."

"You shouldn't; it's very wrong of you," murmured Julia. But in reality what a moment of rapture.

At this awkward moment suddenly Mrs. Nuss, a stiff old retainer appointed to be her maid until her marriage with young Parish, appeared.

"Your mamma wants you, miss," she

said firmly and away tripped the pretty Julia in much confusion. When she was at the door.

"Tell me, nurse, who is that gentleman there?"

"There? Oh, why that's young Perkins, a fine young man as ever."

"No, no. Over there—there."

"Oh, on, that's Lord Tibbald's son, a great match. Deary, deary me. I recollect when—"

"No, over there is the broad hat and cloak."

"Oh, that?" said Mrs. Nuss.

"For shame, Miss—" said Mrs. Nuss.

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"So wise, and yet so young! Only sixteen or seventeen. Oh, had she heard that our young Romer was "gay," as it is indolently called?

As he retired, pondering over this question, the sudden business view of the transaction puzzled him. Naturally. For at only the second interview to be called on to "name the day," seemed to be hurrying on matters with extraordinary rapidity. Not that he was not eager himself, but he had certainly reckoned on a long preparatory elysium and interchange of love.

It was really not a little embarrassing for the contrivance of these secret marriages, in the present state of the law, is almost helpless.

Suddenly a thought occurred to him, "I'll go at once to Dr. Flyer. The very man."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## The Liquor Selling Question.

A person in Trenton was recently convicted of illegal liquor selling and fined \$50 for the offence, which appears, made some feeling against the officers who took part in enforcing the law. The *True American*, referring to the case, makes the following very sensible comments, which we commend to all those interested in the defense of other persons besides the deferees of the law:

"The city officers who endeavored to make an example of the unlicensed saloon keeper who sold liquor to a minor on Sunday were compelled to submit to a great deal of abuse, both before and after conviction.

There is one fact which those interested in the liquor traffic should not by any means allow themselves to forget, and that is that there is a very large and growing prejudice against it. This prejudice takes many forms all of which, as a result, injures to the trade.

The one way for those interested in the business to best protect themselves is far above reprobation as possible. It is to their interest to help rather than impede the enforcement of fair laws.

The system of licensing the sale of liquors has become so general as to be an accomplished fact, not to readily changed. While, in the opinion of some, it is based on a fallacy, yet there it is, and it should be enforced, and it stands to the benefit of reputable liquor dealers to see that it is.

Every unlicensed liquor saloon not only diminishes the business of licensed houses, but in nine cases out of ten provides a resort for the disreputable and unruly classes, who bring the greatest amount of disrepute upon the traffic. The liquor dealers of this city could do themselves no better service than to aid in ferreting out and punishing those who evade